

Father Hacks To Death Man Girl Accused

Police Doubt Story Told by Slayer, Who Quotes His 7-Year-Old Daughter's Charge Against Victim, 62

Slashed 40 Times With Ax

Doctor's Report Does Not Support Child's Claim of Attack by Old Neighbor

Sixty-five-year-old Sackett Street housekeeper, Mrs. Madeline Svordano, thirty-five years old, of 183 Sackett Street, Brooklyn, was killed Thomas Meighen, sixty-two years old, of 2208 Ocean Avenue, yesterday. He hacked Meighen to death with an ax and then slashed the old man's body in a frenzy of rage, inflicting more than forty wounds. The slayer charged that Meighen had attacked his seven-year-old daughter, Lillian Svordano. The police disbelieved his story.

Shortly after noon Svordano, who is a carpenter, entered the Hamilton Avenue police station and asked to see a detective. He told Detective McCarthy, who was assigned to the case, that he had killed Meighen and that the body of his victim lay in the rear of the Sackett Street house.

McCarthy, with three other detectives, visited the Svordano home and found Meighen dead. His skull had been crushed by the first blow of his ax. Both arms and legs were nearly severed. Strokes of the ax had also cut transverse gashes severing the ribs and crushing the sternum. Physicians examined the body and Meighen died when his skull was split.

News of the killing caused intense excitement in the neighborhood, which is inhabited largely by Italians. It was formerly an Irish colony, and many old residents of the section still live there. One of them was Thomas Meighen. He had lived within a block of the house in which he met death more than forty-five years. Only a few months ago he moved to the Ocean Avenue address. During more than ten years Meighen had been known throughout the neighborhood as a lover of children. They swarmed about him wherever he appeared, clinging to his coat and asking him to tell them stories. More than 100 children stood outside the Sackett Street house when Meighen's body was removed. Many of them wept.

In his statement to the police Svordano said he had informed Sunday evening to Mrs. Svordano of the story told by Lillian concerning Meighen's behavior toward her. He questioned the child and says she corroborated what her mother had said. The boy alleged to have been related by the little girl is that she had been up to the cellar of the Sackett Street house four times by Meighen and subjected to ill treatment. Svordano explained that nothing had ever been thought of Meighen's frequent visits to the house because of his fondness for children, and especially Lillian, and his long residence in the same building as a boarder with Mrs. Margaret Svordano, who owns the property. It was to Mrs. Isola's shop in Ocean Avenue that Meighen recently moved.

"We I thought of what Meighen did one I became more and more angry every hour," Svordano told Detective McCarthy. "I was unable to sleep. All Sunday and Sunday night I thought about what I ought to do. We had thought Meighen our firm friend. He had betrayed us. Monday I intended to go out and look for Meighen, but did not go because of rain."

"The next day I was so angry with thinking of my trouble that I could not rest. I paced about the floor of my home. My wife tried to calm me. It was no use. While she was talking to me I heard a whistle downstairs. I had heard that whistle many times. It was Meighen's. He would put two fingers in his mouth and whistle from the foot of the stairs. Then Lillian would go down."

"I seized an ax from my toolbox and started down the stairs. I tried to walk on tiptoe, so that Meighen might think Lillian was coming. He stood waiting at the head of the cellar stairs. He was grinning and asked me, 'Where's my girl?'

"I swung the ax. I felt the blade sink into his skull and he rolled down the cellar stairs. After he hit the bottom he got up and tried to fight me, but his eyes were full of blood. I swung the ax and cut him over the shoulder. That time he fell and did not rise. After that I don't remember much of

what I did, but I know I slashed at him until I fell exhausted."

Police engaged in investigating Svordano's story are seeking another explanation of the killing. Scores of persons living in the vicinity of the Sackett Street house told detectives who questioned them that they knew Meighen had long resided in the neighborhood. Meighen had been respected by them and beloved of their children. During more than a score of years Meighen, who was familiarly known as "Jerry," had been known as "King of the Fairies," from his penchant for Irish fairy stories. Women neighbors of Svordano said grown people of the Italian colony were as much interested in Meighen's fairy tales as their children had been.

Svordano was questioned three hours last night by Assistant District Attorney Nicholas Selvaggi after he had been locked up at Butler Street station charged with homicide. Mrs. Svordano was also questioned and the children of the family, including Lillian, were examined separately. Svordano retold his story of the killing four times. It was said last night he varied it in only unimportant details. He will be arraigned in Adams Street Court today.

Lillian was examined last night by Dr. Ernest Vaughan, physician attached to the office of the district attorney, who had found no evidence to support a charge of an attack on her by Meighen.

Women Hear Higham

Sir Charles Higham was the principal speaker yesterday at a luncheon of the League of Advertising Women held in Keen's Chop House, in West Thirteenth Street. He told the gathering that advertising was still in its infancy both in this country and in England. He is here as Lord Northcliffe's representative to arrange a convention of advertising men in London in 1924.

"We want you to come to England in 1924 and teach us what you know about our profession," he said. "You have many products which England will buy from you, and you will find it a friendly country to trade with."

Other speakers were Helen Hill, president of the league, who presided, and Theresa Jackson Well.

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Girl Convicts Her Mother of Trunk Murder

Mme. Bessarabo, Who Is Sentenced to 20 Years Hard Labor, Wins Acquittal for Her Daughter

Killed Husband for Money

Dramatic Accusation by the Younger Woman Stirred Court as Trial Nears End

PARIS, June 21 (By The Associated Press).—Madame Marie Louise Bessarabo, writer of feverish verse and sensational stories under the name of Hera Mirtel, was to-day convicted of the murder of her husband, whose body she disposed of in a trunk and buried in a cemetery in Paris.

spoken, and pleaded with the jurors.

"Pardon This Child" Her Plea

"Forgive my daughter," she begged them. "Pardon this child. As for me, who am old and withered, I abandon myself to you. This is not a reproach. A woman should remain young. Punish the old one, for she has had youth. She has lost it in work—in doing her duty. She is guilty because she is old. When the scaffold was mentioned she did not flinch. She bent her head. But I do not fear it."

She remained bitingly sarcastic, saying to the jury and judges: "I see only men here. There are 15,000 women in your prisons, but none among my judges."

The principal motive of the murderer, it developed at the trial, was the effort of Mme. Bessarabo to obtain a commission of 600,000 francs due to the husband for oil concessions in Mexico, where they lived prior to 1914.

The first husband of Mme. Bessarabo, Paul Jacques, to whom she was married in Mexico, committed suicide in Paris under strange circumstances in 1914.

To-day at the last minute the daughter broke away from the compelling

domination of her mother, who throughout the trial had shown an almost hypnotic control over her. She said she heard a shot and went to the door, where her stepfather, rooming in a peculiar throaty voice, called to her mother, who tried to explain away the noise, but the daughter finally entered Bessarabo's room, where lay her stepfather, shot in the head.

The girl told how she wanted to call the police at the time of the discovery of the crime, but, instead, obeyed her mother, who urged upon her that "there must be no scandal in the house" and dragged a big trunk from the upper story. But the girl did not repeat what she told the police two years ago about helping her mother to dispose of the body in the trunk, then tying up the body and jamming it into the trunk.

The daughter described the journey in a taxi with the trunk to several railroad stations, until the mother decided to ship the trunk to Nancy, and admitted that it was she who forced Bessarabo's name to a power of attorney to collect a commission of 600,000 francs due him for oil concessions in Mexico, and a letter to show that he was still alive on that date.

Bird Culture Prizes Offered by Mrs. Crane

Cash and Bronze Medals To Be Distributed to Boys and Girls of Pittsfield

Special Dispatch to The Tribune

PITTSFIELD, Mass., June 21.—Mrs. W. Murray Crane, of Dalton, is to occupy the cottage of Mrs. Robert W. Leatherebee at Woods Hole, Cape Cod, during July and August. Mrs. Crane, the daughter of Mr. Charles R. Crane, formerly American Ambassador at Peking, China. Cash prizes and bronze medals offered by Mrs. Crane to boys and girls of Pittsfield for proficiency in bird culture are to be distributed Saturday at the Museum of Natural History in Pittsfield.

Miss Marie Bramwell, of New York, and her sister, Mrs. S. Parkman Shaw, of the Lenox colony, are to sail from New York on Saturday for a six weeks' tour by automobile through England and Scotland.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Perry, of Exeter, N. H., are guests of Mr. and Mrs.

Charles Bulkeley Hubbell at Brookside Farm, in Williamstown.

Mrs. Charles Abbott and the Misses Madeline, Isabel, French and

Evaline Kimball, of Rumford Falls,

Me., are visiting Mrs. Abbott's sister,

Mrs. Warren M. Salisbury, at Tor

Court, in Pittsfield.

Arrivals at the Maplewood Hotel in

Pittsfield include Mrs. James L. Hough-

ting, Mrs. Herman B. Butler, the

Misses Helen V. Elizabeth and Katherine

Drake, of Chicago.

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Chapin, of

Maus Schermerhorn, Mr. and Mrs. John

Shoemaker Shepherd, Mr. and Mrs.

Charles Thaddeus Terry, of New York,

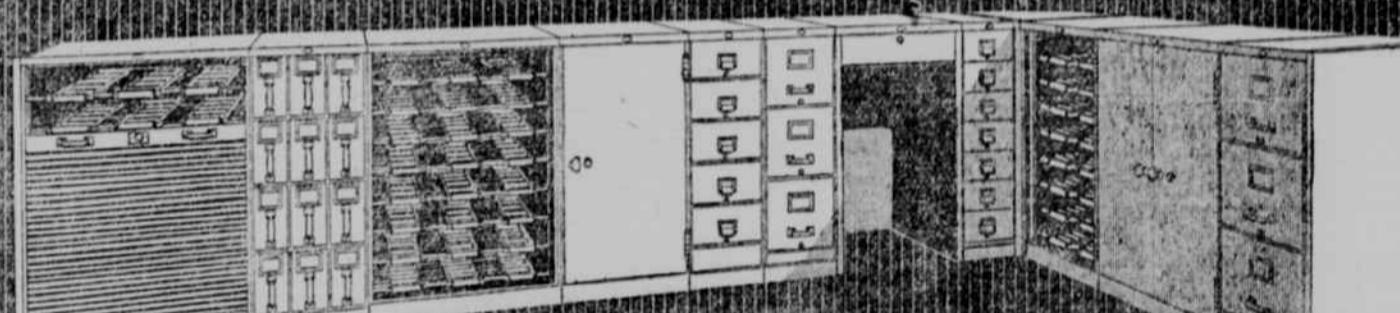
are at the Williams Inn, Williamstown.

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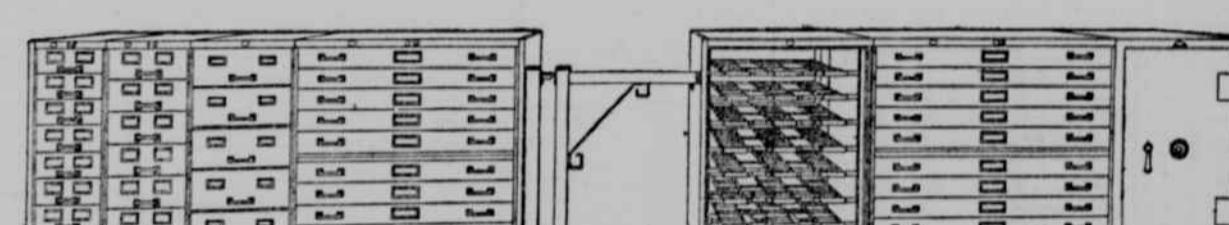
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